IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 18, line 24, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--Figure 6(a) illustrates a simplified edge device MTP routing table according to an embodiment of the present invention. In Figure 6(a), each entry in MTP routing table **600** includes a point code field **602** and an internal ~~link set~~ linkset address field **604**. Point code field **602** stores point codes to be compared to destination point codes extracted from SS7 messages. Internal ~~link set~~ linkset address field **604** of each message specifies the logical entity within edge device **306** to which a message should be routed. For example, if an incoming message has a point code of 1-1-1, the message is routed to the address for ~~link set~~ linkset number 1 on LIM **400**. ~~Link set~~ Linkset number 1 on LIM **400** corresponds to fixed-bandwidth SS7 signaling link **308**, which is coupled to SSP **300** illustrated in Figure 3. If the destination point code of an incoming message is 1-1-2, the message is routed to ~~link set~~ linkset number 2 on LIM **400**. ~~Link set~~ Linkset number 2 on LIM **400** corresponds fixed-bandwidth SS7 signaling link **310**, which is coupled to SSP **302**. If the destination point code of an incoming message is 1-1-3, the message is routed to ~~link set~~ linkset number 1 on LIM **402**. ~~Link set~~ Linkset number 1 on LIM **402** corresponds to fixed-bandwidth SS7 signaling link **312**, which is connected to SSP **304**. Thus, edge device **306** is capable of intelligently performing local routing operations without consulting an STP.--

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